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LOUIS PAUL DESSAR AND HIS WORK

With an interesting personality, and possessed of a marked genius, is Louis Paul Dessar, an ambitious American artist, whose poetic landscape and moonlight effects are full of harmony and breadth of



LOUIS PAUL DESSAR

feeling. He is wonderfully in touch with his work, and has a nature eminently fitted for portraying the poetic side of things. His pictures of fishing scenes and peasant life, broadly handled and printed in soft, restful tones, are not less interesting. That he has a thorough knowledge of the people he puts on canvas is everywhere evident, and I was not surprised when he told me that all his summers are spent among them, living near the little village of Trepied, in northern France, two miles from the sea, a place inhabited by lowly and primitive people, whose work and life give him his inspiration.

The sheep that are his special delight are everywhere to be found, and often for days at a time he follows them around, studying them in all their varied conditions, thus obtaining their most natural poses.

Finding it impossible to get a home to his liking, he purchased two acres of ground and started in a modest way to build his home. With two rooms at first, he resolved that with the sale of each picture another room would be added, and now his house presents a most pic-

turesque appearance—low, rambling, and spacious, situated on the dunes, surrounded by large, full-leaved trees, approached by winding country roads. His studio, situated a half-mile distant, among the pine trees, is one in which the very atmosphere is full of color and inspiration.

His sheep pictures are the ones that bear the most interest for him, and he hopes some day to have a flock of his own for the purpose of studying them still more closely. These are the paintings he



EVENING, BY LOUIS PAUL DESSAR

finishes most rapidly, in contrast to most artists, who generally linger longest on the pictures that please them most; and it is by his sheep pictures that he is best known in this country, although his large canvas, "Le Soir," was one of the medal pictures of the "World's Fair." A peasant after a hard day's work is about to take the horses from the plow and give them their well-earned rest. It is a peaceful event, and the quiet coloring appeals to us. The purplish atmospheric effect, Mr. Dessar tells me, is peculiar to that region. Toward sunset a mist arises which gives this color to the atmosphere, and it always betokens a fair day for the morrow.

Another interesting canvas of his is "The Departure of the Fish-



THE YOUNG MOTHER
BY LOUIS PAUL DESSAR

ermen" (a salon medal picture of 1891), and it being from a French village, is always preceded by prayer. Especially during the herring season are they more devout; candles are burned before the crucifix, and more fervent are their prayers, for at this time they make their longest trips, remaining out often one or two weeks, returning with three or four thousand francs' worth of fish.

His moonlight effects are very pleasing, and they breathe a senti-



THE RETURN OF THE FLOCK, BY LOUIS PAUL DESSAR

ment interesting to all who love nature most when all is at rest. Mr. Dessar acknowledges that the poetic side of nature has the most charm for him, and the romantic rather than the real he more eagerly seeks. Nothing pleases him more than, when twilight comes on, to stroll through the country roads and lanes and enjoy the restful charm of nature. As he puts it, "It is like another world to me—a world of dreams." Little wonder, then, that in his pictures of moonlight he catches the rare feeling of the hour. The soft glow that overspreads the fields is redolent of color, and the rare skill he displays in getting, as it were, the most picturesque spots, where the trees seem the green-

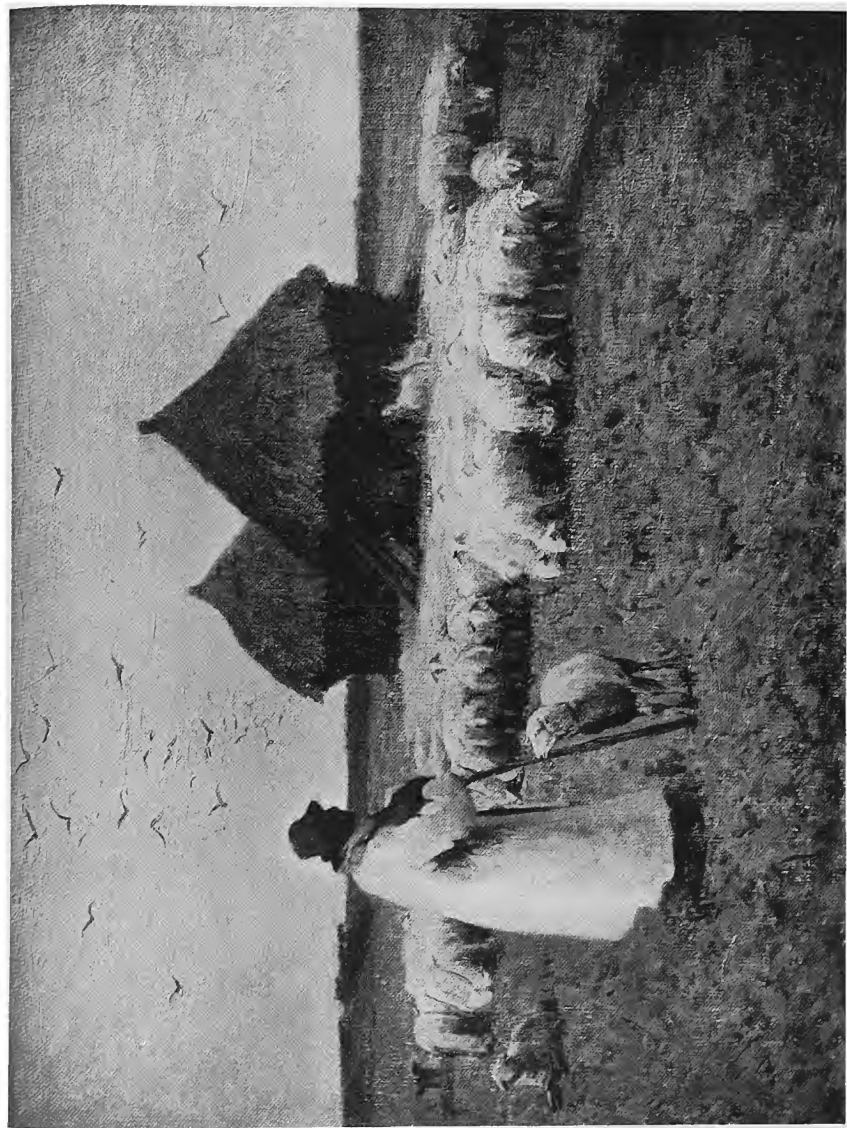
est, the sky the bluest, is appreciated by all his admirers. French themes have been so splendidly handled by him, I asked, why did he not, being an American, and a loyal one, too, undertake to give us as pleasing glimpses of purely American scenes. He replied that such was his ultimate intention, and regretted the fact in not being able to do so at the present, assigning many reasons; among them that the atmosphere here was not so sympathetic, that our peasants had not the picturesque attire or quaint motions of those abroad, a



INTERIOR OF THE STUDIO OF LOUIS PAUL DESSAR

feature so interesting to the artist eye. And then, we, as a rule, are often unfortunately too apt to value pictures more for what they bring than for what they are, the reverse being the case abroad. Monetary questions, too, most important, favor other countries, studio hire and models' pay being so much less. We are still young in art, but are gradually getting into a position to grant concessions that will keep our native talent here.

Mr. Dessar is an Indiana man, and from a child his inclinations have tended toward art. His father, however, was much opposed,



THE SHEPHERD
BY LOUIS PAUL DESSAR

knowing the long struggle and hard work necessary in such a profession, especially when wealth was not behind it. But he made his father promise to allow him to study when he was proficient enough to draw his father's portrait, which he did to the latter's satisfaction. He first studied at the National Academy of Design, and it was here he met the girl he afterward married, an art student like himself, a landscape painter of ability, who since her marriage has quite neglected her art, spending her time at her home in Trepied, in gardening



LEAVING THE SHEEP-FOLD, BY LOUIS PAUL DESSAR

and floral culture. She is, however, thoroughly in sympathy with her talented husband, and helps him greatly in his work. She was the original of the charming subject "Elizabeth," an artistic bit of work, pleasingly rendered, and I might here say that in his portrait work Mr. Dessar always wishes to be in sympathy with and interested in the one he paints.

In 1886 he first went abroad, and in Paris studied with Bouguereau and Tony Robert Fleury, and it is from the former undoubtedly he gets his dainty coloring.

He spends his winters generally in New York, in his spacious and

comfortable studio in the Y. M. C. A. building, and it is there he does his portrait work.

Neither his wife nor himself are particularly fond of society, but enter into it to a certain extent when Mr. Dessar can find time from his work.

His pictures always have a ready sale, and that he is appreciated here is evidenced by the fact that many of his canvases are owned in this country.

He has recently completed a sheep picture for the Salmagundi Club; also a portrait of Mrs. C. C. Ruthrauff, the wife of the well-known art collector of Manhattan. A portrait of Richard Croker, recently completed, is a good likeness of Tammany's leader.

Mr. Dessar is an earnest worker, striving for steady improvement; and with his ability and willingness to work, is certain to accomplish much.

We trust that the day is not far distant when we shall see him permanently established in the land of his birth, interesting us in American themes, as well painted as is his French work now, for they certainly are cleverly handled, and grow on us with each inspection.

LENA M. COOPER.

The photographs from which the illustrations are made are the work of W. A. Cooper, 106-108 East Twenty-third Street, New York City.



ARCHITECTURE AND DECORATION

In the age of mediævalism the crafts of the builders were not restricted by the specialism which now gives to one that province in building we have determined to be the architecture, to another the task called construction, and to another that of the engineering, and yet to another the fitting of a building. We are now advanced in progress from those bygone ages when the necessities of life were garnished with so few luxuries that all tasks were less complex, though not perhaps less difficult, in their undertaking. The mere embellishments to the comfort of our somewhat remote ancestors have come to be necessities with us, from the conditions of our civilization. These hundreds of years have likewise determined a different status in professional capacity, and while planning, building, and constructing are all in accord, yet as professions they are distinct, and the architect of to-day has quite as much to do as had any of his predecessors from Abel to Inigo Jones, although not so many kind of things to do—"a quality, not quantity," state in affairs.

While it is true that constructive science is of primary importance to the architect, it can do no more than form the skeleton which